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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001416

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NSC FOR KHALILZHAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2007

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [GM](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: FRG OFFERS KING ARMORED MERCEDES; SEEKS TO  
COORDINATE VEHICLE'S ARRIVAL BY AIRPLANE IN KABUL

REF: STATE 50444

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MINCOUNS TOM COUNTRYMAN, REASONS 1.5 (B)  
AND (D).

1. (U) GENERAL WALI, SON-IN-LAW TO FORMER AFGHAN KING ZAHIR SHAH, TELEPHONED POLOFF MARCH 20 WITH AN URGENT REQUEST THAT THE USG FACILITATE (THE MORE ACCURATE TERM MAY BE "PROVIDE") DELIVERY OF AN ARMORED MERCEDES BENZ S600L REPORTEDLY BEING GIVEN TO THE KING BY THE FRG AND MERCEDES BENZ. ACCORDING TO WALI, THE GERMANS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE VEHICLE AVAILABLE FOR THE KING UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN KABUL. THE VEHICLE WEIGHS 4,150 KG. AND HAS "ALL SECURITY MEASURES INCORPORATED." (THE AFGHANS ALSO USED THE TERM "BULLET-PROOF." WE ASSUME THIS IS AN ARMORED VEHICLE.)

2. (U) WALI RECEIVED THE INFORMATION FROM DR. RAHMAN ASHRAF, WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS AN AFGHAN-GERMAN GEOLOGY PROFESSOR WHO REGULARLY SPEAKS TO THE AFGHANS ON BEHALF OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT. WALI THEN HAD DR. ASHRAF TELEPHONE POLOFF. ASHRAF CONFIRMED THE ABOVE AND SAID THE GERMANS HOPED TO FLY THE VEHICLE INTO BAGRAM. ASHRAF ASSERTED THAT  
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EVERY DAY, TWO AIRCRAFT FLY FROM RAMSTEIN AFB TO BAGRAM; THE GERMANS HOPED TO BE ABLE TO PUT THE VEHICLE ON ONE OF THESE FLIGHTS -- ONE ARRIVING BEFORE THE KING DOES. (SEE PARA 4.) HE SAID THE FACTORY WOULD DELIVER THE CAR TO RAMSTEIN FROM STUTTGART AS EARLY AS "TODAY" (MARCH 20) OR THE MORNING OF MARCH 21. ASHRAF SAID DR. ZALMAI RASSOUL, FORMER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE KING AND CURRENT CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER IN

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THE AIA, RAISED THE MATTER WITH SPECIAL ENVOY KHALILZAD AND WITH AIA CHAIRMAN KARZAI, WHO BOTH REPORTEDLY SUPPORT THE GIFT. WALI URGED US TO COMMUNICATE THE URGENCY OF THE REQUEST FOR TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE, AS WELL AS THE KING'S ENTHUSIASTIC ACCEPTANCE OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE GENEROUS OFFER.

3. (U) POLOFF ASKED ASHRAF FOR CONTACTS IN GERMANY, PREFERABLY BOTH IN THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND AT MERCEDES BENZ. ASHRAF CALLED BACK TO PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR A MR. MUELLER, WHO HE SAID IS THE MERCEDES DIRECTOR IN CHARGE OF SECURITY VEHICLES. MUELLER CAN BE REACHED BY TELEPHONE AT 49-711-173-3103, IN HIS OFFICE IN STUTTGART. ASHRAF DID NOT HAVE A GOVERNMENT CONTACT, BUT SAID MUELLER WAS "AWARE OF ALL ARRANGEMENTS." DR. ASHRAF'S CONTACT INFORMATION IS AS FOLLOWS: 49-171-540-6283 (CELLULAR); 49-74-717-3274 (HOME); 49-70-7129-74039 (OFFICE, TUBINGEN UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE FOR GEOLOGY AND PALEONTOLOGY).

4. (C) COMMENT: GIVEN USG CONCERNS ABOUT THE KING'S SAFETY INSIDE AFGHANISTAN (REF), THIS OFFER MAY BE A USEFUL ONE, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO EVALUATE THE CAR'S PRACTICALITY ON AFGHAN TERRAIN. THE KING DEPARTS ROME MARCH 25, TO ARRIVE IN AFGHANISTAN MARCH 26, SO THERE IS LITTLE TIME TO GET THE MERCEDES IN PLACE TO RECEIVE HIM ON THE  
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GROUND, AS THE GERMANS REPORTEDLY WANT AND WE MAY WISH TO SUPPORT.  
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